

Mental Health Integration for Chaplain Services (MHICS)

Description and Course Overviews

The Mental Health Integration for Chaplain Services (MHICS) Certification is a one-year training program that aims to better equip chaplains in the provision of care to Veterans and Service members with mental health problems. The MHICS Certification is comprised of three 12-week courses. Each course is comprised of five distance modules and one face-to-face training. Distance modules typically include three self-paced units (a unit is usually composed of a reading, a 50-minute video didactic, and a discussion/assignment) along with a regularly scheduled one-hour LIVE session. Over the course of the full training year, participants are to devote approximately 10% of their professional effort to this certification program.

Chaplains in the MHICS training function across a diversity of settings, including: inpatient and outpatient healthcare contexts; mental health specialty settings and general medical settings; and a wide array of non-medical operational contexts within the military. This diversity – which embodies differences in the types of persons chaplains serve, the problems chaplains encounter, the motivations for seeking chaplain care, the availability of specialty mental health care, and the willingness of different populations to use mental health services – will and should influence the ways in which chaplains apply the knowledge and skills learned in the MHICS training.

Recognizing this, the MHICS training aims to provide chaplains with educational content that can be flexibly applied. In particular, the MHICS training aims to equip chaplains to do the following: identify the signs and symptoms of mental health problems (especially those prevalent among Veterans and Service members); judiciously use evidence-based psychological practices and principles within the scope of chaplaincy practice; effectively collaborate with mental health professionals (including bidirectional exchange of referrals and mutual understanding of services offered); foster resilience, human flourishing, and prevention of mental health problems; critically interpret, use, and potentially participate in scientific research; understand important psychological processes and psychosocial issues; provide care for care providers and practice good self-care; and address the unique religious, spiritual, cultural, and relational needs of persons with mental health problems.

These abilities are in no way intended to supplant chaplains' core identities as pastoral care providers, but rather to enhance chaplains' skills and capacities as effective collaborators in mental health care. This training is not designed to equip chaplains to perform the functions of persons trained and licensed as mental health care professionals, such as diagnosing mental health problems, conducting psychological assessments, or assuming the role of a psychotherapist. Participants in the MHICS training are encouraged to coordinate closely with partnering mental health professionals to determine how to most appropriately and synergistically apply learning content within the different contexts where they function. Chaplains who complete the MHICS training will be equipped to give leadership to the development and provision of patient-centered mental health care that enhances meaning, purpose, and coherence in the lives of Veterans and Service members.

An overview of the three MHICS courses is provided below. Although substantial changes are not anticipated, course material remains subject to revision.



Course #1: May 12 – August 1, 2014

This first course will involve a face-to-face kickoff that introduces chaplains to the MHICS program, followed by five modules that will lay the groundwork for integration of spirituality and mental health, examine historical and contemporary possibilities for integrating spiritual and psychotherapeutic approaches to care, provide particular exposure to possibilities within Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT), and give a broad overview of approaches to and contexts for mental health care.

- **Face-to-face meeting (2.5 days)**
 - ❖ *Day 1: Developing the framework*
 - ❖ *Day 2: Integrating pastoral identity and psychological principles*
 - ❖ *Day 3: Bridging the gap (half day)*
- **Module 1: Spirituality and linkages to mental health (2 weeks)**
 - ❖ *Unit 1.1: Examining the relationship between spirituality and health: Promises and pitfalls*
 - ❖ *Unit 1.2: Research growth and trends in spirituality and health*
 - ❖ *Unit 1.3: Spiritual care in a time of therapeutic technique*
 - ❖ *LIVE Session*
- **Module 2: Pastoral care and approaches to psychotherapy (2 weeks)**
 - ❖ *Unit 2.1: History of psychotherapy & pastoral care*
 - ❖ *Unit 2.2: Defining "evidence-based" in psychotherapy*
 - ❖ *Unit 2.3: Overview of contemporary psychotherapies*
 - ❖ *LIVE Session*
- **Module 3: Spiritual care and innovations (2 weeks)**
 - ❖ *Unit 3.1: Spiritual practices and contemporary psychotherapy*
 - ❖ *Unit 3.2: Mindfulness*
 - ❖ *Unit 3.3: Possibilities for spiritual care in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)*
 - ❖ *LIVE Session*
- **Module 4: Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT; 2 weeks)**
 - ❖ *Unit 4.1: Introduction to ACT: The perils of language*
 - ❖ *Unit 4.2: The practice of ACT: Facilitating the process of change*
 - ❖ *Unit 4.3: Applications of ACT within chaplaincy*
 - ❖ *LIVE Session*
- **Module 5: Mental health essentials (2 weeks)**
 - ❖ *Unit 5.1: Mental health providers and settings*
 - ❖ *Unit 5.2: Mental health diagnoses*
 - ❖ *Unit 5.3: Pharmacotherapy*
 - ❖ *LIVE Session*

Course content is subject to change.

Course #2: September 15 – December 5, 2014

The second MHICS course contains modules that focus on standards of practice within chaplaincy, specific therapeutic modalities within mental health that can synergize with spiritual care, and social and relationship issues unique to Veterans and Service members. This course also covers the complexities and necessity of care for the care provider and command.

- **Module 1: Chaplaincy standards of practice (2 weeks)**
 - ❖ *Unit 1.1: Toward a research-informed chaplaincy*
 - ❖ *Unit 1.2: Spiritual assessment*
 - ❖ *Unit 1.3: Documentation of chaplaincy care*
 - ❖ *LIVE Session*
- **Module 2: Care for the care provider (2 weeks)**
 - ❖ *Unit 2.1: Stress response and self-care*
 - ❖ *Unit 2.2: Care for the care providers and command*
 - ❖ *Unit 2.3: ACT for the care provider*
 - ❖ *LIVE Session*
- **Module 3: Motivational Interviewing (MI; 2 weeks)**
 - ❖ *Unit 3.1: MI – Part I*
 - ❖ *Unit 3.2: MI – Part II*
 - ❖ *Unit 3.3: MI – Part III*
 - ❖ *LIVE Session*
- **Module 4: Problem-Solving Training (PST; 2 weeks)**
 - ❖ *Unit 4.1: PST – Part I*
 - ❖ *Unit 4.2: PST – Part II*
 - ❖ *Unit 4.3: PST – Part III*
 - ❖ *LIVE Session*
- **Module 5: Current pastoral concerns (2 weeks)**
 - ❖ *Unit 5.1: Post-deployment adjustment and spirituality among recent Veterans*
 - ❖ *Unit 5.2: Marriage and family issues for Veterans and Service members*
 - ❖ *Unit 5.3: Meeting the needs of special populations*
 - ❖ *LIVE Session – Presenters*
- **Face-to-face meeting (2.5 days)**
 - ❖ *Day 1: Applied ACT training*
 - ❖ *Day 2: Applied PST and MI training*
 - ❖ *Day 3: Discussion and application of standards of practice module (half day)*

Course content is subject to change.



Course #3: January 5 – March 27, 2015

The third MHICS course provides five modules of intensive training on mental health problems that are prevalent and/or are of particular importance within Veteran and Service member populations. Chaplains will be presented with etiology, overview, and treatment information for mood disorders, substance abuse, serious mental illness, suicide, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and moral injury. Finally, the course will conclude with an examination of diverse perspectives on suffering and human flourishing.

➤ **Module 1: Mood disorders, substance abuse, and serious mental illness (2 weeks)**

- ❖ *Unit 1.1: Depression & mood disorders*
- ❖ *Unit 1.2: Substance abuse disorders*
- ❖ *Unit 1.3: Serious mental illness*
- ❖ *LIVE Session*

➤ **Module 2: Suicide (2 weeks)**

- ❖ *Unit 2.1: Suicide in military and Veteran populations*
- ❖ *Unit 2.2: Suicide prevention*
- ❖ *Unit 2.3: Religion, spirituality, and suicide*
- ❖ *LIVE Session*

➤ **Module 3: Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD; 2 weeks)**

- ❖ *Unit 3.1: Overview & evolution of PTSD*
- ❖ *Unit 3.2: Evidence-based psychotherapy for PTSD*
- ❖ *Unit 3.3: Military Sexual Trauma (MST)*
- ❖ *LIVE Session*

➤ **Module 4: Moral injury (2 weeks)**

- ❖ *Unit 4.1: Moral Injury*
- ❖ *Unit 4.2: Killing*
- ❖ *Unit 4.3: Providing care for moral injury*
- ❖ *LIVE Session*

➤ **Module 5: Spirituality, suffering, and resilience (2 weeks)**

- ❖ *Unit 5.1: Diverse religious approaches to suffering*
- ❖ *Unit 5.2: Resilience*
- ❖ *Unit 5.3: Human flourishing*
- ❖ *LIVE Session*

➤ **Face-to-face meeting (2.5 days)**

- ❖ *Day 1: ACT in care of moral injury*
- ❖ *Day 2: Sustainability*
- ❖ *Day 3: Course evaluation and graduation (half day)*

Course content is subject to change.